

UNIFORMED PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT

AFFILIATED WITH INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

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PAUL J. RAPANAULT

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February 24, 2009

Dear Senator Coleman, Representative Sharkey and members of the Planning and Development Committee,

My name is Paul J. Rapanault. I am the Director of Legislative and Political Affairs for the Uniformed Professional Fire Fighters Association of Connecticut. Our 4,000 members serve in 50 fire departments throughout the state.

I am addressing you today in **OPPOSITION** to **S.B. 394 AN ACT CONCERNING STATE MANDATE RELIEF, H.B. 5529 AN ACT CONCERNING THE FUNDING OF MANDATES ON TOWNS, H.B. 5537 AN ACT CONCERNING APPROVAL OF UNFUNDED STATE MANDATES, H.B. 5550 AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A STATUTORY CAP ON UNFUNDED MANDATES, H.B. 5558 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROCESS OF LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL OF STATE MANDATES, H.B. 5565 AN ACT CONCERNING UNFUNDED STATE MANDATES FOR MUNICIPALITIES, H.B. 5869 AN ACT CONCERNING THE APPROVAL PROCESS FOR UNFUNDED STATE MANDATES and H.B. 6388 AN ACT PROVIDING MANDATE RELIEF TO MUNICIPALITIES**. These bills place unnecessary and burdensome restrictions on the General Assembly's ability to pass worthwhile legislation. We believe they are an overreaction to the current fiscal crisis and would not even be considered in better financial times.

Some mandates, funded or not, are standards of conduct recognized by the majority as necessary in creating a just and equitable society that fulfills the lofty goals and aspirations of our founding principles. To the best of my knowledge, none of these statutes mandating a specific conduct of government were passed in a vacuum. Debate and the free exchange of ideas preceded a vote on the issues. Both sides of the debate were represented and in the end, in the tradition of a democratic society, the majority view prevailed. To pass these bills would be an unwarranted attempt to restrict state powers to legislate and puts the legislature on a very slippery slope of creating extraordinary legislative standards for political expediency.

Professional Fire Fighters urge your opposition to restrictions on mandate legislation as unduly restrictive and counterproductive to effective representative government.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul J. Rapanault', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul J. Rapanault
Legislative/Political Affairs